

GUARDIANSHIP

4

Get a Permanent Appointment for a Minor

Part 4: What to do after the Court Hearing
(Instruction Packet)

SELF SERVICE CENTER

FOR APPOINTMENT OF A PERMANENT GUARDIAN FOR A MINOR

PART 4: WHAT TO DO AFTER THE COURT HEARING (Instructions Only)

How to assemble these documents

This packet contains instructions about what to do after the hearing on a permanent appointment of a guardian or of a minor. Be sure the documents are in the following order:

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PROCEDURES: WHAT TO DO AFTER THE COURT HEARING GUARDIANSHIP OF A MINOR

STEP 1 What to do after the hearing is over:

- A. GO TO THE CLERK, PROBATE REGISTRAR:** If the Judge/Commissioner grants the PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN, you will need to take the **originals** of the following:
- THE ORDER OF APPOINTMENT,
 - THE LETTERS, **AND**
 - THE ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT.

When you take the documents listed above, the clerk will:

- Review the ORDER OF APPOINTMENT,
- Complete the LETTERS,
- Have you sign the ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT, **AND**
- File the originals.

Note: You should ask the Clerk to certify a copy of the LETTERS for you to prove that you have the appointment and authority from the court. There is an **\$18.00 certification fee plus \$0.50 per page** to do this.

- B. BOND:** If the Judge/Commissioner did not waive the bond and ordered that you post a bond in for a certain amount, call a bonding company, purchase the bond, and file the original bond with the court. Do this **immediately** after the Order is signed, because no LETTERS will be issued without the bond.
- C. LETTERS OF APPOINTMENT:** Keep a **certified copy** of the LETTERS to show anyone who needs to know that you have authority from the court to act as guardian, and what the authority is.
- D. ORDER OF APPOINTMENT:** Keep a copy of this to remember what the Judge/Commissioner ordered you to do specifically in this case.
- E. ORDER TO GUARDIANS:** Keep a copy of this Order and read it often. This Order contains the general instructions about what you are required to do as guardian.

STEP 2 What else to do after the court hearing:

- A. FILE ANNUAL REPORT:** You **must** file this form with the Clerk of the Court **every year on or before the anniversary date** of the ORDER OF APPOINTMENT as guardian of the minor. The annual report describes to the court the following:
- How you are caring for the minor, **AND**
 - Whether the guardianship should be continued.

Note: You must file a Petition with the court if you wish to terminate the guardianship and be legally discharged as the guardian. See the form called **ANNUAL REPORT OF GUARDIAN**.

B. FEE STATEMENT. If you are charging a fee to act as guardian, you must file a FEE STATEMENT.

C. OTHER HELP: If you still have questions about this procedure, you can ask a lawyer for legal advice. You can look up a lawyer in the telephone book under "attorneys". Also, the Self-Service Center has a list of lawyers who will help you help yourself. The list show where the lawyers are located, how much they charge to look over the court papers or answer your questions and what their experience is.

SELF-SERVICE CENTER

PROCEDURES: HOW TO FILE THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIAN

USE THIS PACKET if you have been appointed as the guardian for the Ward, and **it has been a year since your appointment.**

WHEN AND HOW TO FILE THE ANNUAL REPORT:

STEP 1 The guardian for the Ward must complete the ANNUAL REPORT **every year, on or before the anniversary date** of your appointment as guardian for the Ward.

STEP 2 Complete the ANNUAL REPORT in **black ink**. Answer all of the questions. After you have completed the ANNUAL REPORT, you can file or mail the ANNUAL REPORT to the Court.

STEP 3 Mail **a copy** of the ANNUAL REPORT to the following people:

- The Ward
- The Ward's Conservator (if applicable)
- The Ward's spouse or the Ward's parents if the Ward is not married and has at least one living parent
- The Court appointed lawyer for the Ward (if applicable)
- Any other interested person who has filed a demand for notice with the Court.

Keep a copy of the ANNUAL REPORT for yourself with a list of the people to whom you mailed the ANNUAL REPORT.

STEP 4 File the **original** ANNUAL REPORT with the Court through the following:

- **In person:** File the **original** ANNUAL REPORT with the Clerk of the Court, 125 West Washington, 1st Floor, Phoenix, Arizona, or 222 East Javelina, 1st Floor, Mesa, Arizona, and bring a copy of the Annual Report with you to have it conformed, **OR**
- **By mail:** Mail the **original and one copy** of the completed and signed ANNUAL REPORT along with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope to:

Clerk of the Court - Probate Department
Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County
125 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

- Request that a copy of the ANNUAL REPORT be conformed and mailed back to you. This will assure that your file contains a copy of the ANNUAL REPORT reflecting the date it was filed with the Probate Court Clerk.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

STEP 5 FIDUCIARY/GUARDIAN'S CHANGE OF ADDRESS. If you have been appointed as a guardian or Fiduciary, you must list your address in the initial Petition and you must **immediately** notify Probate/Mental Health Court Administration in writing if your mailing address changes **anytime** during the term of your appointment. Your notice of change of address must contain the case number(s) of the case(s) in which you have been appointed.

STEP 6 WARD'S CHANGE OF ADDRESS. If you have been appointed as a guardian or Fiduciary, you must notify the Probate/Mental Health Court Administration in writing within **72 hours** of the change in address of a Ward or Protected Person. The Notice must contain the case number and the Ward's or Protected Person's new address. All written Notices may be delivered personally or can be mailed to the Court at the address given above.

Note: A Fiduciary or guardian who fails to notify the Court of a change in address will be required to pay **all costs** resulting from any failure to notify the Court of the address change.

SELF-SERVICE CENTER

INSTRUCTIONS: HOW TO FILL OUT THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIAN

USE THIS PACKET if you have been appointed as the Guardian for the Ward, and it has been a year since your appointment. You must complete this form every year you are the Guardian for the Ward on or before the anniversary date of your appointment as Guardian. Follow these steps to complete this form:

STEP 1 Complete the ANNUAL REPORT OF GUARDIAN.

Paragraph 1: Write the following information:

- The Name of the Ward (the person you are the Guardian for),
- The Ward's date of birth, address, and telephone number.

Paragraph 2: Complete the following:

- Describe where the Ward lives (not the address). Things to include would be whether it was a private home, boarding home, or nursing home. How many people live in the Ward's room? Who looks after the Ward, and so forth, **AND**
- The name of the person in charge or the name of the place where the Ward lives, the address, and the telephone number.

Paragraph 3: Write in the Ward's current doctor, the doctor's address and telephone number.

Paragraph 4: Give the following information about the Ward's physical and mental health:

- Write in the date the Ward was last seen by a doctor,
- Describe any changes in the Ward's health, **AND**
- Make sure you attach a current copy of the doctor's report about the Ward's current physical and mental health.

Paragraph 5: Information about the Ward's Guardian. This is information about **you**. Give your name, address, and telephone number.

Paragraph 6: Information about the Guardianship.

- Write in the number of times you have seen the Ward in the last 12 months, and the date of your last visit.
- Then tell the Judge/Commissioner whether or not you think the guardianship should continue and the reasons it should or should not continue.

Paragraph 7: Information about the person responsible for the Ward's assets.

- Write in the name, address, and telephone number of the person responsible for the Ward's assets. If the Ward does not have any assets, then write in N/A for not applicable.

Paragraph 8: Information about State, County, Federal Agency Services.

- If the Ward receives any state, county, or federal agency services, write in the name of the agency, and describe the services the Ward receives. If the Ward does not receive any services, write in **no**.

Signature: Make sure you date the document and sign and print your name.

Mailing Affidavit: Write the names and addresses of the people to whom you mailed a **copy** of the ANNUAL REPORT and the date you mailed them. Then sign your name to show that you mailed the document.

STEP 2 Read the Self-Service Center packet **Procedures: How to File the Annual Report of the Guardian**.

SUPERIOR COURT OF ARIZONA, MARICOPA COUNTY
PROBATE/MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

**FIDUCIARY FEE GUIDELINES
OCTOBER 1994**

A. SUGGESTED FEE SCHEDULE

Service Provided	Fee Allowed
1. Setup fee for a guardian, conservator, or guardian/conservator for referral, investigation, and setup, allowed in the first year only.	\$600 total (Allowed once)
2. Annual fee for a guardian for annual client contact with the ward or protected person based upon monthly personal contact by the fiduciary or an employee trained in social work. (See note D regarding fees for companionship services.)	\$900/annually
3. Annual fee for a conservator for estates of \$100,000 or less, plus .2% of the average value of the estate for the year in excess of \$100,000.	\$300/annually plus .2%
4. Check writing fee for a conservator for each check written in excess of 5 checks per month. No charge will be allowed for the first 5 checks written each month. There shall be no charge for checks written to the fiduciary and the fiduciary's attorney and these shall not be counted toward meeting the "first five free" provision.	\$10 per check
5. Management fee for a conservator, generally not to exceed 3% annually of total receipts and disbursements. Neither the fiduciary's fee nor the fiduciary's attorney's fee shall be included in the disbursement total. The fiduciary's expertise, amount of work and investment performance will all be considered in determining the amount of the management fee. (This fee is in addition to the annual fee.)	Not to exceed 3%

NOTES:

- A. Extraordinary fees must be justified by a showing of necessity and billed at a reasonable hourly rate.
- B. Extraordinary costs must be necessary, reasonable, and documented.
- C. Any anticipated extraordinary fees must be explained in the estate management plan and on the fiduciary's itemized fee statement and affidavit.
- D. Companionship services should not exceed \$15.00 an hour plus mileage at \$0.29/mile. These are companionship services over and above the once monthly social worker contact already covered by the annual fee for guardian. (See #2 under suggested fee schedule.)
- E. Contract or "out-sourced" services (those services not performed by an employee of the fiduciary) provided to the ward or protected person for such things as accounting services, tax preparation, visitation, guardianship services, investment management and bookkeeping shall be billed to the ward in the same amount as paid by the fiduciary for each such service.

The Court does not endorse the practice of a fiduciary "marking up" or adding a profit margin to services which the fiduciary does not provide with the fiduciary's own employees. For example, if the fiduciary used an outside accountant to prepare the accounting for a fee of \$250.00, the fiduciary is allowed to charge the ward only the \$250.00. The fiduciary is allowed to charge for any related services provided by the fiduciary such as supervision or monitoring of the contract service provider.

B. FIDUCIARY DUTIES - FIRST YEAR TYPICAL SERVICES

1. Pre-Court Appointment

- a. Meet prospective client and assess client's physical and mental status, need for guardianship, conservatorship, or both; assess placement needs.
- b. Contact family/friends regarding referral, prospective client's status, possible court proceedings, and willingness to serve.
- c. Obtain financial information. (When the referral is from Adult Protective Services or an attorney, this information is usually complete. If the referral is from another source, such as a hospital social worker, this information may be incomplete.) You may need to establish a relationship with the prospective client to review client financial records. (Financial records may be in "good condition" or in bags, boxes, and under beds.)
- d. Contact physician for medical opinion and to obtain medical report. (May require taking prospective client to physician's office).
- e. Meet with attorney to provide case information and begin legal proceedings.
- f. Monitor prospective client (when necessary) pending court proceedings.

2. Obtain Court Appointment

- a. Attend hearing.
- b. Obtain surety bond.
- c. Obtain certified copies of Letters.

3. Post Court Appointment

- a. Record Letters, if there is real property.
- b. Change the mailing address for client's mail.
- c. Obtain all insurance information.
- d. Contact all financial institutions to close accounts, transfer funds, supersede on accounts, restrict accounts and change mailing address for statements, etc.
- e. Change Payee for Social Security payments.
- f. Contact all sources of income to change mailing addresses.
- g. Contact all medical insurance companies and other insurance companies to obtain information on coverage and to change mailing address.
- h. If real property, obtain condition of title report and appraisal, if necessary.
- i. If real property, contact Assessor and County Treasurer to change mailing address of all records.
- j. If there is an automobile, obtain title or duplicate title and check liability insurance coverage.
- k. If stocks and bonds, either transfer into street name in a brokerage account or change mailing addresses on all issues. Obtain "basis" information when possible.
- l. If furniture/personal property, list and obtain appraisal when necessary.
- m. Determine tax status, obtain copies of prior years' returns.
- n. Determine testamentary status, obtain original or copy of will.
- o. Determine funeral arrangements.
- p. Obtain information required for death certificate.
- q. Prepare inventory for filing with court.

4. Nursing Home Placement. Supervise and coordinate client's needs.

- a. Medical, dental and optical appointments.
- b. Medical treatments.
- c. Medication.
- d. Social and emotional needs.
- e. Clothing and personal items.

C. FIDUCIARY DUTIES - EXTRAORDINARY SERVICES

1. Home Placement (Provide 24 Hours On Call Services)

- a. Obtain staff.
- b. Supervise staff.
- c. Schedule staff.
- d. Prepare payroll.

- i. Compute withholdings on paychecks.
 - ii. Prepare quarterly and yearly reports.
 - iii. Obtain workers' compensation coverage.
 - iv. Obtain unemployment coverage.
 - e. Maintain house.
 - f. Maintain auto, if necessary.
 - g. Oversee household monies.
 - i. Obtain receipts.
 - ii. Reconcile monthly.
 - h. Supervise and coordinate client's personal needs.
 - i. Nutrition.
 - ii. Hair appointments.
 - iii. Medication.
 - iv. Medical treatments.
- 2. Adult Foster Care Placement: Supervise and Coordinate Client's Needs.**
- a. Medical, dental, and optical appointments.
 - b. Medical treatments.
 - c. Medication.
 - d. Social and emotional needs.
 - e. Clothing and personal items.
- 3. Companionship Services (See Notes D and E above regarding charges)**
- a. Social visits.
 - b. Accompany for lunch, walks, shopping.
 - c. Prepare correspondence.
 - d. Routine physician visits or follow-up and status reporting.

D. FACTORS THAT MAY MAKE FIDUCIARY SERVICES EXTRAORDINARY

1. Review of papers and documents, which are in disarray, to identify and locate assets.
2. Notification of banks and financial institutions of estate status.
3. Obtaining insurance record information.
4. Sorting through boxes or files for information.
5. Degree of ease in accessing information.
6. Sizeable number of financial institutions to contact.
7. Family disagreement or dissention.
8. Character and values of family members, business associates of the ward and others.
9. Level of cooperation from client/ward.
10. Medical or placement crisis with the ward.
11. Level of monitoring required by ward.

E. CHECKLIST FOR EVALUATION OF FEES (for evaluation of cases with fees in question)

1. What are the total administrative expenses? Attorney's fees, fiduciary fees, accountant, investment advisor, tax preparation, etc.
2. What is the make-up of the estate and its gross value? Cash, stocks, bonds, a business, real estate, art, antiques, collections.
3. What is the estate income?
4. What kind of management of assets was required?
5. Did real estate require more than routine management?
6. Did a business have to be run?
7. Who performed the various tasks? Were the tasks appropriate to the person performing them? Were billed tasks performed by an attorney which could have been performed by a paralegal, secretary, runner, accountant?
8. Was the time spent on any task excessive?
9. Were the tasks performed necessary? (In a probate, for example, could the property have been distributed by affidavit? Was a formal, court-approved accounting necessary?)
10. In a guardianship or conservatorship, what aspects of the ward's condition required unusual time and effort?

11. Who are the relatives/heirs/devisees? Did contentiousness among interested persons cause unusual expenditures of time and effort?
12. Is the hourly rate acceptable?
13. Are the attorney's and fiduciary's records of time spent and tasks performed complete and specific?
14. Are there duplications of time?
15. Was research billed in areas which should not have required research?
16. Are there steps an attorney should have taken to eliminate the need for litigation or unusual activities? A recent memorandum decision reverses a trial court's allowance of fees in a conservatorship because the attorney did not act "with reasonable care to avoid the unnecessary use of his service by the guardian and conservator". The attorney billed for services necessitated by the conservator's failure to perform and the attorney was therefore in breach of his fiduciary duties under Fickett because he did not act quickly to have the conservator (his client) removed. In the Matter of the Guardianship and Conservatorship of Harsh, Maricopa County Public Fiduciary v Finks, 1 CA-CV 92-0118 (1994).
17. Are the persons who received a copy of the accounting or petition for fees sufficiently competent or sophisticated to object, or is their interest (financial or otherwise) such that it's not worth the hassle?